

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is requested in view of the foregoing amendment and following remarks. Applicants thank the Examiner for withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112.

The Claims are Unobvious

Claims 1-3 and 15-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as allegedly unobvious over Estell *et al.* (USPN 7,332,320) and Roggen *et al.* (U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2005/0148059).

Applicant respectfully submits that neither Estell *et al.* nor Roggen *et al.* teach the variants presently claimed. Estell *et al.* teaches subtilisin substitutions that provide subtilisin variants with altered immunogenicity. There is nothing in Estell *et al.* that would lead one of skill in the art to produce the presently claimed variants that have protease activity in detergents and are thermostable. Estell *et al.* describe the immunogenicity of variant proteases and further mention that some mutations may modulate stability (including N218S; see, e.g., Example 6). However, Estell *et al.* do not describe a protease variant comprising a combination of the V26T or V26S substitution with the N218S substitution in a GG36 protease that exhibits wash performance and increased thermostability compared to GG36.

Roggen *et al.* do not cure the deficiencies of Estell *et al.* to render the presently claimed variants obvious. As with Estell *et al.*, Roggen *et al.* teach substitutions that produce altered immunogenicity, not proteases that have wash performance and increased thermostability as compared to GG36. As there is no teaching, suggestion, nor guidance in either of these references to produce GG36 variants as presently claimed, Applicant respectfully submits that the presently claimed invention is unobvious over the cited art and requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that the application is fully in condition for allowance. Early notice to that effect is earnestly

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requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding the present application he is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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/Kamrin T. MacKnight/
Kamrin T. MacKnight
Registration No. 38,230

Danisco US Inc.
925 Page Mill Road
Palo Alto, CA 94304-1013
Tel.: (650) 846-5838
Fax: (650) 845-6504